



Office of the



State Superintendent of Education

Introduction of the DC Tobacco Youth Coalition

What is the DC Tobacco Youth Coalition?

The DC Tobacco Youth Coalition is a new youth leadership program established through the collaboration between the Office of the State Superintendent of Education-Division of Wellness and Nutrition Services and the Department of Health-Tobacco Control Program. DC-TYC will engage youth in tobacco control prevention by providing them with the opportunity to gain skills and authority to make decisions that help improve the policy environment, change social norms, and reduce smoking initiation and consumption in their communities.

How does tobacco affect our DC youth?

According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids in the District this year:

- 0.8 million packs of cigarettes are either smoked or bought by youth.
- Forty-thousand youth are exposed to second-hand smoke
- 3,500 (~10.6) high school students smoke
- 8,000 youth under 18 years of age will ultimately die prematurely from smoking
- The tobacco industry spends an estimated \$16 million in marketing each year

The District does not prohibit the use of cigarettes to minors. What does this all mean?

- We need DC youth to advocate for tobacco control in their communities because the tobacco industry targets youth to market their products. Therefore, it will take DC youth to reject these messages through educational prevention, community outreach, and advocacy.

Other youth are stepping up to the plate to combat the tobacco industries' agenda.

According to the CDC, youth throughout the nation are successfully advocating for tobacco control in their states and communities because...

- **Youth are creative: YUFA STAR** (The Youth United for Action Showing Tobacco Ain't Right) youth coalition in California mobilized their community to restrict minors' access to tobacco products by teaming with local law enforcement to conduct sting operations and successfully advocate for a county-wide tobacco licensing ordinance
- **Youth have powerful voices: REAL** Hawaii Youth Exposing the Tobacco Industry and other student groups participated in Kick Butts Day rally at the state capital urging lawmakers to increase taxes on all tobacco products
- **Youth are motivators and educators: The Reality Check** the New York statewide youth-led campaign partnered with the New York State Attorney General's Office and two major magazine publishers to initiate production of tobacco-free classroom editions of Time, Newsweek, People, and Sports Illustrated
- **You are advocates: Oklahoma's Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT)** is a statewide, youth-led movement that works on youth access, clean indoor air policies, and smoke-free schools

Purpose of the DC-TYC

- To educate youth about the health effects of tobacco products and the tobacco industry.
- To develop and train youth advocates in tobacco prevention within the District of Columbia.
- To develop and lead projects that will educate and engage the District of Columbia on tobacco prevention.

Benefits for becoming a DC-TYC member

- Members will become youth leaders in tobacco prevention in their communities.
- Members will be trained in media advocacy, tobacco prevention, peer education and policy development. These skills can transition into adulthood.
- Members will learn to develop and implement the DC-TYC logo, name, and brand.
- Members will actively apply skills taught in their trainings through outreach events.
- Members will receive stipends for their participation and attendance in DC-TYC activities.

Requirements of DC-TYC member

- Applicants must be a 8th-12th grade student currently enrolled in a DC Public School or DC Public Charter School
- Members must commit for nine months with the option for a summer internship
- Members must commit to a 1.5 day training retreat in August/September 2011
- Members will meet weekly for 2 hours (additional hours may be required for projects, which may include up to 25 hours some months).

There are 12 positions; we are seeking one youth representative per District of Columbia Ward and two At-Large members. The At-Large members will represent the entire city instead of their individual wards and also serve as the chair for the District of Columbia Tobacco Free Coalition Youth Subcommittee for the District of Columbia Tobacco Free Coalition. For further information please contact Ms. Kevon Harris at Kevon.harris@dc.gov or 202-741-6488.